

SOCIAL ACTION

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HERE AND THERE

In the Doldrums

Business remains in a depression trend which Community Projects do not reverse. Calcutta marks the lowest point. Private capital is shy of new ventures; it even contemplates closing firms or demoting headquarters into branch offices. Fear of early nationalisation, strikes, riots and besieging of managers in their offices, all the skirmishes of economic warfare paralyse initiative and efficiency.

The visit of the Prime Minister in December and his harangues to various business groups did little to inject new vitality. Labour was advised to eschew violence, management to develop a human approach. But labour which has achieved success through violence is not likely to throw its weapon away, and management which has been locked in, readily thinks of a lock-out.

Industrial relations call for urgent attention. The few Institutes of Industrial Civics that exist are power-

less ; they are too few, too small, and too inexperienced for influencing labour-management relations. They will play their part only when they will receive due support and recognition.

Social Pow-wow

Secunderabad offered the Indian Conference of Social Work the spacious hospitality of the Osmania University and the courteous services of its well-deserving Hyderabad branch. The programme included hardy annuals like Health Education, and Social Defence, and up-to-date subjects like Community Projects and Tribal Welfare.

On the Community Projects the usual yarn was spinned out with sapient dullness and stretched out to enmesh government, and private agencies, trained workers and youthful volunteers.

On tribal welfare, the "missionary approach" provided for a lively debate at the sectional meeting and at the plenary session. According to some sociologists, the resolution proposed at the plenary session betrayed that the discussions had been held in the lecture-hall of zoology ; it looked indeed like a neat little monster, not anything so solemn as the Piltdown Anthropoid, but a scorpion-looking exhibit with an arresting head and a poisonous tail. The resolution began with a platonic appreciation of the social work of Christian missionaries and terminated with a request to the Government of India to constitute a Committee of Enquiry on proselytising. Happily commonsense and fairness prevailed, thanks very largely to the lucid

and warm leadership of Sri Kodanda Rao of the Servants of India Society, who had head and tail neatly excised.

Arguments

Why make any discriminatory mention of Christian missionaries when other missionaries, religious, philosophical, political, etc. are also in the field? When century-long oppression has depressed the tribes, why object to their social uplift, even if done by Christians? Is Christianity so wretched a religion? In any case, what has a religious faith to do with the Indian Conference of Social Work or with our secular government?

Once the surgical operation was over, the resolution looked like the unattractive corpse of a centipede. Some tried to reshape it with a mention of the "religion of humanity," but was not this trying to impose a positivist dogma? One may regret that no Indian stalwart of scholasticism was present to bring out the true feelings of the assembly. The work of non-tribal agencies should be welcome for tribal welfare provided their objects and methods be respectful of integral humanism and accommodated to the cultural levels and needs of the underprivileged. The Conference terminated with hearty exchanges of greetings; youths and volunteers went back to their easy work of clearing slums and building houses whilst professors and trained workers returned to their difficult task of discussing what should and could be done.

A. L.

ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY

In the preceding instalments of this study, mention was made of the importance of economics as an area for the application of democratic principles. This assertion was said to be a conclusion that is imposed by the natural features of this segment of social life itself, and one which receives further confirmation from the nature of its position in the social organism as a whole. In the first place, the relationships prevailing there are those which stem from several distinct but substantially equal parties of interest. The respective rights and duties that are thus involved would therefore seem to be of a kind which respond with particular effectiveness to democratic procedures. And secondly, it is the same persons who constitute the subjects of each division in the social structure be it political, cultural, or economic. Whatever methods of control they become accustomed to on one of these levels; certain manifestations there from are bound to project themselves, to some extent at least, onto the others as well. Consequently, the total effective, strength of democracy in a society's over-all dimensions will be closely related to its real vitality in each major functional organ there-of. The state of democracy in economic concerns will thus be a reliable barometer of its social intensity in general.

It was likewise explained in those earlier chapters how economics is taken to mean that series of social relations whose specific aim is the production and distribution, on an exchange basis, of the goods and

services required by the exigencies of a people's temporal existence. And how the myriads of human actions encountered there are capable of being classified for practical purposes, according to several clear-cut lines of identity. Viewed in their most elementary aspects, it is essentially capital, labour, and the consumer who are seen to be the sources of these diversified operations. The persons fitting into such separate member classes comprise the "people" of an economic community. A democratic order in the midst of that environment, then, implies a functional organization which is representative of, regulated by, and regardful for the true interests of each distinct economic component. It will be our objective in the present chapter to outline a ground plan of this type of social edifice.

Before actually embarking upon the project, or perhaps we may consider it an initial step there-in, it is advisable to make some sort of general assessment of the main economic elements involved. Without a good working knowledge of our materials' properties, we cannot reasonably expect to formulate an accurate building plan. This preliminary appraisal is therefore meant to serve as a theoretical justification of, and a practical introduction to, the main construction scheme which will follow.

As all of us know, an economic enterprise, like every other social unit, depends upon two substantial factors for its existence. It must have material objects, and it must have human beings. When either agent is missing, no economic reaction can occur. When both

are present, and combined in the right proportions, countless, salutary, practical benefits are obtainable by uniting them according to various specialized equations. One procedural directive that is of critical importance at all times in the handling of these living experiments offers this simple-sounding yet not exactly easily applied rule: To secure the most satisfactory results from any combination of these basic ingredients, ample provision must be made for securing a nexus between them which is really consonant with the natural qualities of each. The primary problem posed here is complicated still more, of course, by a host of modifications and ramifications. Thus there is not only the question of how to juxtapose men and materials, but such additional tests of judgment as how to co-ordinate different kinds of materials, and how to integrate independent men. Besides these further angles, increasingly perplexing intricacies are injected into the situation through the medium of the private ownership phenomena, whereby men are permitted to exercise personal dominion over the material elements used in the economic equation. Our perceptive powers must thereafter be alerted to a yet higher degree, so as to catch the finer shades of distinction which mark off man as man from man as materials, as it were. Reduced to everyday terminology, the parties in the case under these circumstances become man the worker, man the owner, and the materials of work with which both are connected. Over and beyond these quantities, as end term in the process, is the figure of man the consumer. It is the relationships transpiring on this most complex

level of economic reality which become the proper subjects for democratic orientation.

We may carry out our preliminary investigation, then, by considering how the owners of surplus material resources frequently commit some portion of these possessions, either individually or in concert with others, to some particular productive use. While taking such a step, these capitalists do not separate themselves completely from all control over their property. This positive aspect of the ownership claim continues to reside with them as before, although it does subsequently become subjected to certain externally imposed restrictions. Because these extensions of the personality of their owners, as the objects of the property power can be conceived, are now brought into immediate contact with the similar personal possessions of others; or, as is equally likely to be the case, because such objects are joined directly with the personal services of separate human beings (workers), a system of social checks and balances for the prevention of conflicts and the promotion of harmony begins to function. The resulting conjunctions and cross-connections of independent proprietary rights requires a simultaneous, parallel recognition of reciprocal responsibilities by all concerned. Individual opportunities are circumscribed by social obligations. In the words of Pius XI, " men must take into account in this matter not only their own advantage but also the common good." In so far as this process of circumscription has to do with the varying associational conditions between owners of material resources, we

are confronted by a host of problems dealing with what may be called shareholder or capital relations. To the extent that this same definitive mechanism affects the mutual positions of the capital owners and those persons who actually engage in using these instruments of capital, the workers supplying productive labour, we come up against a distinct though connected class of complications bearing the label of labour relations. And where the positive interaction of capital and labour projects practical consequences into a social area which is for the most part outside the legitimate boundaries of their specific preserve, we step into a third sphere of property contacts commonly described as consumer or public relations. Needless to say, each of these economic sectors have features which are peculiarly relevant to a discussion of Economic Democracy. In a study such as ours, however, it will not be possible to delve into the intriguing possibilities of all three. Nor does there seem to be an equal degree of need for concerning ourselves with these several sections. Democratic procedures are surely much further advanced in matters dealing with capital relations than they are with regard to the operations of labour and consumer relations. It should be satisfying enough for us, then, if we confine our attentions to the implications and applications of democracy in the last two economic categories.

When we move out of the zone of strict capital relations, and into that of labour, what do we find as the basic factual conditions there? On one hand, of course, will be the owner or owners of material re-

sources, who have put forward a quantity of their property on behalf of a productive venture. Thus far only are they able to proceed by themselves towards the goal of gainful endeavour. This at least is generally the case in enterprises of any significant size. Equipped with natural and mechanical forces of diverse kinds and degrees, but lacking either the ability or the opportunity for the best utilization of such power by themselves, these investors ordinarily find it impossible to proceed with the realization of their program until they obtain the more or less specialized personal services of other individuals. Capital cannot become truly fruitful except after its active combination with efficient labour. In the organizational structure that inevitably develops to meet the practical implications of this economic situation, the second group of associates, those who contribute their personal energies and talents to the project's advancement, constitute labour or human investors in the fortunes of that enterprise. Labour is everywhere recognized as a co-factor or a co-principle of production. And if the investors of materials have, by reason of their admitted property rights in the things which they invest, a continuing power of control over the economic use or disposition of the resources thus involved, so too do the investors of labour, on account of their personal autonomy as human beings, possess a valid claim to a continuing control over economic determinations affecting themselves. "For," as Leo XIII declared, "the exertion of individual power belongs to the individual who puts it forth, employing this power for the personal

profit for which it was given." Furthermore, in much the same fashion as the capitalist risks the continued safety of his property, when he invests it economically, even so do the workers endanger the security of their persons in such a cause. Should the undertaking prove to be an abortive one, and either collapse entirely or else carry on in what is at best a faltering manner, the capitalist stands to lose so much of his material goods as are concentrated in that particular venture. Such a setback may perchance have disastrous consequences for him, so far as his economic affairs are concerned anyhow, since it may entail the full destruction of his primary sources of necessary income. More often than not, however, the material effects of this sort of misfortune for the capitalist will be a great deal less serious than that. We must remember, as Pius XI has pointed out, how material investments usually come from what he terms a person's "superfluous" resources, "that portion of his income which he does not need in order to live as becomes his station." The prospects of the worker in this respect are nowhere near as shock-proof. According to the terms of his investment, it is himself, his flesh and blood, his intellect and will, which are, within humane limits to be sure, placed in the service of the enterprise. Since these elements of his person constitute the very substance of life itself for him, it is, in a way, everything he has that is subjected to the vagaries of the wheels of economic chance. In the process of making this productive effort, he may suffer progressive deterioration of his physical and spiritual faculties. Along with these subjective dangers, there

is the additional possibility that he may have taken from him his specific job opportunity, with such accompanying dangers as loss of the practical value of hard-earned skills, and complete deprivation of needed income following in its wake. Cut off from such elementary external benefits as these, a worker can be reduced to really dire straits. It is as true today as it was in the time of Leo XIII that "without the results of labour (this) man cannot live."

If we total up, then, the values of the respective investments made by the capitalist and the worker, what they contribute, and what they risk, we find that there are substantial and similar interests on both sides. We need not go into the matter of the comparative worth of these sets of resources at this time. Suffice it at the moment that we acknowledge a definite status of mutuality between these separate investors. This is the critically important fact to be remembered in any preparation for determining the formal content of economic democracy.

Mention was made earlier of the not always clearly recognized fact that neither the capitalist nor the worker, nor both together for that matter, compose the full membership of the enterprise. Their joint roles in the economic unit simply add up to the position of producer. And no humanly engineered productive system is able to maintain itself solely by the strength of its internal organs. Whatever innate dynamism is possessed by such an organism, it will ever be at least partially dependent upon a stimulating force coming

to it from the outside. This external factor, economically speaking, is at bottom a resultant of the combining of purchasing power with human need, otherwise known as effective consumer demand. It amounts to both a final and an efficient cause in the life of the enterprise. Only to the extent that it is present can there be anything like an enduring productive process in the strict economic sense. It is the need which this third party has to satisfy that suggests to the producer the primary ideas of his procedures. And it is likewise this potential user's ability to pay a price for a required product that supplies a practical incentive for its actual production. By entrusting, as it were, the satisfaction of this need, and agreeing to pay the resulting charges, to a supplier the consumer may be said to constitute another investor in the economic undertaking. By the double opportunity he affords the makers of a product, of giving and of getting that is, or of gaining subjectively and objectively in the final analysis, this party of the third part adds another real, though rather intangible item, to the resources of the enterprise. For purposes of specific evaluation, the content of this extremely important economic quantity is ordinarily measured in terms of purchaser's "good will."

Accordingly there is a clear, though admittedly not close, analogy between the position of this latest investor and that of the preceding ones. The consumer too may suffer physical or spiritual harm as a consequence of his commitment to particular products. He may likewise be the loser in an external fashion when a balance is struck on the economic level. From a

consideration of these very real features, the conclusion that readily follows affirms a true element of mutuality, on a proportional basis, between the consumer and his economic opposite numbers — capital and labour. While manifestly not an investor to exactly the same extent as the other two parties, he is nevertheless an unavoidable and undeniable partner. Unquestionably, then, this is another vital interest to be reckoned with in a proposal for economic democracy, since, by reason of its positive contribution to the enterprise, it is entitled to a share in the active control of that body.

This brings us to the end of our preliminary glance at the principal factors with which we must deal in setting out a plan for a democratic economic order. On the strength of what we have seen, it may be said that there is a fundamental note of equality discernible in the characteristics of the three primary economic components. Each one adds something decidedly different yet essentially important to an enterprise's fortunes. Each one thereby has a claim upon and a control over a segment of the total resources. This, of course, is an ideal social situation for the application of democratic principles. Such an inherent juxtaposition of the several categories of members implies unmistakably a right in each to a proportionate participation in the governance of the association. Since the ensuing operations of the latter entails a unified usage of separate sets of possessions, and as the right of use is inseverable from a right of ownership, the several groups of owners here are entitled to a certain measure

of control over the common functions. Which means, very simply, that the intended economic evolutions have not merely to be compounded of these parties, but should also be working for their best benefits, and ought to be directed by their respective representatives as well. This, it must be immediately evident to everyone, is the essence of the democratic functional relationship. We have but to deduce now, from these substantive conditions, a general outline of their procedural implications.

At this point, it is well to recall a key practical assumption which goes to form the foundations of democracy. It is usually expressed as a very simple verbal ratio: rights are related to responsibilities. The essential significance of this principle is that the moral power which a person has over something, or, against something, derives from that individual's obligation to do something. Thus one has a right because he has a corresponding duty which demands the exercise of the right for its fulfilment. In the realm of concrete experience, this connection between rights and responsibilities has a broader connotation. It includes a procedural as well as a substantive aspect. A person not only owns a right out of consideration for his responsibility, but likewise ordinarily gets only such recognition thereof as his overt activity succeeds in procuring. This notion is aptly expressed by the timeworn adage: freedom demands vigilance. Now we saw in our examination of political democracy how people enter into that sort of social organization for

the purpose of better securing and promoting their various personal rights. And how the very existence of such an association is virtually dependent upon the members' submission to a directive authority which goes by the name of government. Under these conditions, the determination of the actual state of a member's rights is largely a matter of governmental policy. It is indeed true, as we observed, that a good government will be keenly conscious of its subjects' rights, and will constantly work for their advancement. It will be of and for the people in other words. But the tell-tale evidence of history amply demonstrates the inconstancy of these controlling agencies. Governments, especially when they are autocratically or otherwise autonomously established, have what may well be called a habit of separating themselves sometimes radically, from those over whom they hold sway. The best human device discovered for checking this perverse tendency is the assumption of directive authority by the people themselves. This is the hallmark of the democratic system.

When we relate all of this to the structural features of the economic enterprise, a fuller functional perspective of what democracy means there is achieved. For we take into consideration the entire operational mechanism, means as well as ends. The question of who governs then becomes emphasized to an equal degree with the problem of how to govern. And unless the answer in both instances comprehends a combination of all interests, capital, labour, and consumer,

there can be no such thing as real economic democracy.

It ought not require much explanation to show that, when we speak of government in connection with economic affairs, we have in mind the management of an enterprise. For it is there only that the essential governing powers of legislation, adjudication, and administration, so far as they inhere in the enterprise itself, exist. Such vital directive actions as formulating general rules of operation, interpreting and adjusting these rules so as to settle concrete disputes arising out of their application, and directing the day-to-day implementation of these regulations, they are the stuff which constitute the essentials of economic management or government. A truly democratic order in this sector of society, therefore, implies the joint participation therein by the three parties-at-interest.

From what we have noted earlier, concerning the relative basic positions of each member-group in the enterprise, it is fairly easy to conceive the managerial roles of capital and labour under economic democracy. In view of the near equality, from a practical standpoint, of their respective economic contributions, though in point of essential fact the worker's human investment is much superior to the capitalist's material advancement, there must be a proportionately equal sharing of the management prerogatives between the two sides. Both together, acting through appointed agents of course, will handle the business of making, defining, and applying the operational policies. At bottom, this will mean that each interest retains equal

decisional power on the whole, though not with respect to every substantive aspect of the enterprise's life. Thus, in constructing, interpreting, and applying the general policies, capital will have charge over those which deal in the main with material resources. Labour will do the same thing in matters which primarily involve the status of workers. Where the two interests are indistinguishably joined, as in questions of wages, hours of work, profits and prices, decisive action will be taken by the parties in concert. Authority is wielded on a bipartisan basis. In a system of separated power such as this, there is undoubtedly a serious potential danger for the enterprise. Representatives of the dual producer interests may get enmeshed in the snares of disagreement, and so either slow down or bring to a full stop the wheels of production. It is in this instance, though most assuredly not there alone, that the rightful management-sharing role of the consumer performs a valuable service.

The consumer, we have found, has a real and positive stake in the composition of the enterprise. But, generally speaking, it is neither as extensive nor as intensive as the claims of capital and labour. As purchaser of its product, his commitments to the enterprise will usually involve an extremely limited amount of his total personal resources. And, except in the relatively few instances where he must deal with a monopolistic producer, he will always be able to change the place of his investment with a minimum of personal inconvenience. While the line of distinction between the legitimate producer and consumer spheres of in-

terest may be somewhat difficult to draw with any exactness it would be sufficient for our immediate purposes if we settle upon such differentiating data as appears hereafter. Capital and labour, as producers, are chiefly intent upon the internal ramifications of production, and are for the most part only secondarily, though certainly not superficially drawn toward its external implications for consumption. Quite to the contrary, the consumer's primary economic involvement is with the mechanics of satisfaction and utility. Rather remote, yet none the less real, are his concerns with the supply side of the exchange system. In view of these organic circumstances, therefore, it is fitting that the resulting functional controls should be equated in a similar fashion. Accordingly, the manual and material forces of production will always be entitled to a pre-eminent, but not exclusive, regulative power over the internal productive affairs of the enterprise. Conversely, the partners in consumption shall exercise a reciprocal dominion with respect to the external or consumptive aspects of the endeavour. Since the underlying operations at work here are not separable into isolated compartments, seeing as how consumption inevitably stems from production, and production incessantly strives for consumption, neither are their respective mechanisms of control capable of a mutual exclusiveness. The two powers must coalesce, directly and indirectly, throughout the length of their lines of action. The right of cross-intervention in the others' operating precinct which is implicitly reserved here to each party in the exchange process, serves as

an internal balancing factor for the better stabilization of the basic economic equation. It injects a restraining or humanizing influence, so to speak, of a private and voluntary character, into the arena of the free play of economic forces. To the extent that its facilities are availed of by the joint market interests, in just the same degree will there be a lessening of the need for corrective action from outside the enterprise by the agents of public authority. Where the impact of these cross-currents of economic authority impinges upon the managerial function, it leaves an imprint which has important practical consequences.

Since the scope of managing activity necessarily embraces all phases of the enterprise's services, it will always be concerned with the organization's two primary economic operations, production and consumption. The key problems of cost and of value which this responsibility entails must ever absorb the greater portion of its attention. As pointed out above these crucial factors stand together on the most intimate terms, and their proper coordination is a prime essential for the attainment of true economic welfare. In the nature of things here, the producer's major efforts are expended on the cost element, as this is what vitally affects the security of their economic position. In the same way, and for identical reasons, the interest of the consumer inclines toward the element of value. For the best satisfaction of each group's share therefore, and hence the highest good of the whole, both should be represented in the enterprise's management. This is the substance of the democratic approach. The consumer

is meant to unite with capital and labour in directing the affairs of their joint venture. The pattern of managerial action which flows from such a united front will not be of a homogeneous character. It must be adapted to the exigencies of the situation. Due to the disproportion between the respective investments of producer and consumer, with the outlay and risks of the former over-balancing those of the latter, the official position of capital and labour will have to be superior to that of the consumer. The first two parties possess decision-making powers, whereas the third has only a right of recommendation. Though this vocal prerogative that is granted the purchaser cannot but appear weak when viewed alongside its more virile corelative, nevertheless, if it receives the support of an organized following, it can do much toward making its weight felt at any particular moment. This is the way in which it can be especially effective during periods of serious disagreement between capital and labour. As a non-voting, yet openly speaking, and product-using associate, the opinions and suggestions which it sees fit to offer are sure to make a strong, perhaps even conclusive impression upon the contending partners. That inevitable sensitivity of producers to buyers' attitudes, the general intensity of which is rather well expressed by the popular adage: "the customer is always right," will ever assure the consumer an alert and sympathetic audience in the highest management circle. Whoever speaks for this user interest is bound to get a responsive hearing from the representatives of those who serve it.

Such then is our preliminary sketch of the contours of economic democracy. Its outlines are admittedly rough, but it is believed they are coherent. The central feature of the figure, and the dominant idea it is intended to convey, depicts a pluralistic system of management for the economic enterprise. Effective control is adequately apportioned among the several categories of members. This has traditionally been recognized as the core of a democratic order.

J. S. Connor

IS THE WORLD HEADING FOR STARVATION?

During the past year, family planners in India, whose plans, if they succeed, will destroy the family, have made considerable progress. The Government, in its Five Year Plan, has officially given its blessing, and what is more effective, a goodly sum of the taxpayers money, to spread family planning. Mr R. A. Gopalaswami, the Census Commissioner, in Vol. I. of the Census, has come out fully in favour of family planning. Although the Prime Minister disowned the Census Commissioner's statement as being official, it has a strong backing in government circles. Moreover the publication of the Census is made at the taxpayers expense and the Census itself is regarded by many,

who are not used to subtle distinctions, as the opinion of the government.

The Family Planning Research and Programmes Committee of the Government of India has recommended to the Government that family planning services should form an integral part of the health service of any local authority. To further this end the Committee recommends that family planning centres be established in association with suitable maternity and child welfare clinics.

The Report of the Committee contains all the usual artifices of birth control propaganda. We are told not to be narrow minded and think of birth control in a narrow sense. It includes family care, maternity aids, child spacing, etc. The rhythm method is recommended. The sponsors of the scheme have been quick to mix some good suggestions with what they know will arouse opposition. But the intention of pressing the use of contraceptives is clear. The Committee states: 'A proper evaluation of the clinical services and the acceptability and effectiveness of contraceptives supplied by them should be immediately undertaken. The Government should take up the responsibility to investigate fully all the existing contraceptives in use and those which may be brought up later....'. The Committee goes on to state that the Central or State Government should approve the kind of contraceptive adopted for use through the clinics. All-out propaganda is to be made to popularize family planning through public education on three levels: (a) mass communication to create over-all attitudes favourable to the

idea of family planning ; (b) community education to create support for local family planning activities ; (c) instruction in the specific methods of family planning.

Not only government agencies but also voluntary ones like the various family planning associations will receive financial aid from government for the spread of the use of contraceptives. Moreover, a minimum staff, explicitly for family planning purposes, will be attached to maternity centres, etc.

Many birth control clinics have already been opened in the country and the near future will see that number substantially increased. Governors, ministers, other government officials, the presidents and chairmen of the many conferences that take place, do not miss an occasion to preach a sermon on family planning. There is ground to fear that the demographic inquiries made in this country at the instance of the UNO and its branches, are carried on by those most favourable to artificial birth control — thus robbing the reports of impartiality.

In September, 1954, under the auspices of the UN there will be an international conference of experts on world population problems. This will be at Rome. At the moment of writing there is a suggestion of a similar conference — or is it the same ? — to be held in India this year.

All these activities should remind those who are opposed to artificial birth control, and Catholics especially, that they are losing the fight and that if they

wish to regain ground before it is too late, much more study of the subject must be made and greater efforts made to make the Catholic point of view known. It is supine to go on glibly talking about the resistance that will come from India's traditional spiritual values while these self-same values are being daily undermined. There can be no doubt that many excellent people are very confused on the issue and need enlightenment.

We can therefore heartily recommend a booklet by Prof. Donnithorne, professor in London University, entitled *Is the World Heading for Starvation?* and published by the Catholic Social Guild, Oxford. Although it only touches on the moral aspects of the problem, the booklet gives a clear bird's-eye view of the whole demographic situation with special reference to the danger spots in Asia. The author confounds the pessimists and produces evidence "to show that the output of foodstuffs and other essentials can keep pace, with the likely rate of population growth and, not only keep pace, but also fast enough to enable higher standards of living to be attained."

Not the least useful thing in the booklet are the many useful quotations from non-Catholic sources. Our family planners could very profitably meditate, for instance, on the *World Food Survey* of the FAO which remarks: "Many people who have given serious study to the population problem, prophesy doom for mankind unless the rate of population growth can be drastically checked. It is worth reiterating that the fundamental solution of the problem lies in increasing

the productivity of the individual by putting at his disposal modern scientific knowledge and the tools of modern technology. To the extent that this is done, every individual can become a source of new wealth to his country and to the world." It is overlooked by family planners that the most important factor in production is man, and an improvement in his health means an increase in production. As Point Four Programme states: the "reduction of the death rate in the under-developed areas will mean an increase in the human resources available for production in proportion to population." Those who wail that improved medical facilities will result in a ruinous rise in population should reflect that unless the high death rate in India is lowered, all efforts to raise production will prove abortive.

The author brings forward a very apposite remark from F. L. Brayne, who has written so wisely and sympathetically about India: "India," he says, "is short of leaders and of educated people, if artificial birth control were regularly taught, the first people to learn and practice it would be the very leaders and educated people of whom India so urgently needs more and more to help raise the general standard of living. Publicity and education are so backward in India that before the knowledge of scientific birth control reached the general mass of the people...the shortage of leaders brought about by birth control would seriously handicap further progress in raising the standard of living." While family planners are

busy planning to rob us of leaders, the rest of us are asking : " After Nehru, who ? "

Prof. Donnithorne gives many instructive examples of successful methods to increase food production. Israel makes a striking contrast with India. Traditionally a dry and arid land, by hard work, careful cultivation and water-storage irrigation, the desert has been made to bloom. With us about 90 percent of our river water runs waste into the sea. " Israel doubled its catches of sea fish in two years," while " the rich fisheries of the Indian Ocean are only now beginning to be exploited." As in the production per acre of rice, so in the production of fresh water fish in ponds and in paddy-cum-fish culture, we lag far behind other countries. In China yields go up to 2,000-4000 lbs per acre, while in India it is only 700-2000 lbs. The *Survey* already mentioned, remarks : Too much stress cannot be laid on the great possibilities of extending this resource."

Besides the possibility of increasing yields and bringing new land under cultivation, and the possibility of sea farming, etc., there are the more sensational synthetic foodstuffs : sugar from wood, wood molasses for livestock, oleo margarine from carbon, air and water ; urea for cattle fodder.

Birth control is a short-sighted and ruinous policy, since, to conclude with the author, " The planning of populations is, in the nature of things, so uncertain in

its results and, indeed, also in its aims — that wisdom will avoid it. Meanwhile we must apply ourselves to develop the earth for the benefit of all its peoples and to the greater glory of God.”

A. Nevett

SOCIAL REFORM BY LEGISLATION

When a vast country like India is faced by complex social problems, and is animated by the impatient desire to put an end to social abuses as quickly as possible, there is always the danger of believing that legislation can effect miracles. An all-powerful Government with the forces of law and order at its call, and with the tradition of enforcing its decrees efficiently and even ruthlessly, believes itself capable of changing the garment of society by the web of legislative formulas. The danger of illusion is all the greater when there is, as in India, the machinery of democratic government but where frequently the “voice of democracy” is but the voice of a progressive few, who, as often as not, do not represent and cannot express the sentiment of the masses.

However, the fact remains that in our country legislation has achieved considerable social progress or rather social reform. The suppression of Satti occurs

to the mind at once. Then there are the legislative enactments that affected marriage and family life, like the laws on widow remarriage, the age of consent, succession in matriarchal families, etc. Finally there have been, in increasing measure, laws in favour of Harijans and of working men, the constitutional abolition of untouchability, the provision of security for workers and tenants, improved conditions in factories and in housing, and so forth. A striking example is the recent intervention by Government on behalf of textile workers providing for compensation and bonus when they are sent away through no fault of theirs, with connected measures to protect and encourage the industry as a whole. All these enactments have succeeded to a certain extent. So the temptation "to make men good by law" is strong, and is not always resisted by those "dressed in brief authority" and in a hurry to reform mankind.

In reality, if we examine the success which legislation has achieved in these matters, we shall see that it is most striking when it was a question of arresting what was distinctly an injustice about which there could be no two opinions. Satti was abolished because the conscience of men revolted against the cruelty and criminality of the evil custom. You can insist and enforce by law that working hours for employees shall not go beyond a certain figure, that sanitary conditions shall be maintained in factories, and compensation be given to workers deprived of means of livelihood through no fault of their own. These are matters where the ethical implications of the law are clearly under-

stood and generally accepted. Up to this point the legislation law has achieved, and will continue to achieve genuine social reform.

But when we have to deal with customs or habits whose suppression is not demanded by strict justice, but is desirable in the interests of health, of social progress, of national solidarity, customs consecrated by time and usage, and linked to religious practices and convictions, then the role of legislative action is limited and its effectiveness doubtful. The preparation of the ground by a popular movement of enlightenment and social education is essential, legislation can only register and confirm the progress already made. It will not create the needed mentality. Obvious and elementary as this may sound, there is no truth more openly flouted by our reformers and legislators. They have launched themselves on a course which is destined to bring bitter disillusionment to the second generation of free India's citizens, if it has not already done so to the present. And with disillusionment comes cynicism, the loss of that enthusiasm, that élan for a free and reconstituted society, which is the most precious element in our national revival.

Let us apply this criterion of the lack of clear ethical or moral compulsiveness to certain legislative enactments which have had only a limited success. There is first the thorny question of Prohibition. It has never been made quite clear whether Prohibition is to be enforced because it is economically necessary and helpful to the poor, or because it is morally wrong

to take any alcoholic drink. Gandhiji's opposition to drink as also the opposition of many orthodox people among Hindus and Muslims is on moral and religious grounds. There is no doubt that the passion with which the measure is defended and maintained in several States is due to this religious opposition to drink, according to the mind of Mahatma Gandhi. Nevertheless the argument ordinarily brought forward in favour of it is the havoc drink causes among the poorer classes. But this does not cover the enforcement of the law against people who can afford to drink and who see nothing morally wrong in moderate drinking. The result is extensive defiance of the law, disrespect for the legal machinery which has to enforce it, and the manufacture and imbibing of harmful liquors which were unknown under the regime of liberty. These abuses have assumed proportions which make one question whether the real good which has been undoubtedly achieved by the Prohibition Law, is not offset by these new dangers to society. The popular education among the masses in favour of temperance or total abstinence as desirable moral objectives was not carried out as a preliminary step. And without this the reform was foredoomed to failure. Public authorities are coming to realise it. Dr. T. R. Navaratne, the Deputy Minister for Prohibition in Bombay, stated in Bijapur recently that "the drink evil could be eradicated only by social education. He admitted that other means including legislation could not effectively and permanently check the drink habit." (*Times of India*, Nov. 12th.)

The movement for the uplift and rehabilitation of Harijans is another instance of the relative failure of legislation in a social matter. Untouchability has been abolished in theory by the Constitution. Certain Government orders will be obeyed and undoubtedly they constitute a definite progress in this matter. Harijan students are admitted in given proportion in all schools and Colleges. Posts in Government service and seats in the legislature are reserved for them. Temples are thrown open to Harijan worshippers. Government can go thus far and, — no further. It cannot compel high caste people to eat with Harijans, to give and take their daughters in marriage. It cannot compel orthodox people to frequent the temples which have been thrown open to Harijans. Government can impose legal safeguards, it will not create friendliness and the sense of brotherhood. For this, an appeal to the heart and mind of the public is essential, and this cannot be done by officialdom. It must be done by social workers with a sense of vocation, nay, in this particular instance, by workers inspired by a religious motive and the conviction that all men are equal before God.

That is why the proposed Bill in the Central Parliament which seeks to penalise in various ways the disabilities inflicted on Harijans, — refusal to admit them to places of public congress, to the use of common utilities like wells, forests and grazing grounds, or subjecting them to the obligation of begar or forced labour, — will not create the revolution in the mentality of people in the villages. Without such a change of outlook in conservative circles there will be no effective

suppression of untouchability. Nay, the proposed penalties might produce a reaction in the contrary sense. Hence we must remind our unhappy Harijan brethren that their sorrowful journey towards freedom and self-respect will not end with the passage of this bill. They will have to look for their salvation to people who really love them and who sincerely believe that they are brothers.

A more striking instance of the relative failure of legislation in social matters comes from the information given by the Census Report on the prevalence of child marriages. Sarda's epoch-making bill was passed more than twenty years ago and people took it for granted that child marriage was for all practical purposes ended in India. The census reveals six million girls and three million boys within the 5-14 year age group who are married. Though this figure undoubtedly marks a decrease, perhaps a considerable decrease, on the figures before the Sarda Act, the magnitude of the numbers must come as a surprise to most readers. The truth is that though the people of India are among the most law-abiding, they will not obey a law which goes against the usage of centuries, a usage in which they see no moral wrong, nay which many think is imposed on them by their religion. And unless you take them along with you in your legislation, there will be no means of making this incredibly obstinate and resistant people obey your law....

All this must make our legislators reflect. There is extraordinary confusion of thought regarding the

"welfare state." It is conceived as the omnipotent agency for supplying material benefits, and as an infallible authority for producing moral goodness by enactment. This idea is sustained by the irrepressible optimism of men who believe in words and not in work. But in truth the task of social reform will be carried forward effectively by the labours of voluntary organizations, and by the weapon of persuasion, not by the double edged sword of official decrees which often defeat their own purpose. In this sphere, even more than in the sphere of economics, activity in the "private sector" will be more effective than the orders and sanctions of legislatures.

Lastly, let us not forget the role which the Christian missionary has played and can still play in bringing about social progress. Whether it be in the matter of Harijan uplift, or the defence of the Adivasi from the rapacity of landlords, whether we consider the raising of the status of women or the service of the unfortunate, the Christian missionary has not only rendered direct service, but has given a challenge which the Hindu Community was obliged to note and to answer by its own programme of social reform. That Christian service and its implied challenge are still necessary for the progress of society in India. Communalism is frequently denounced in Indian political circles. Its political dangers are great. But its social dangers are greater still. It means too often a narrow and reactionary attitude in cultural and social matters. It inspires to a large extent today the agitation against missionaries which some politicians have thoughtlessly

encouraged. There is no doubt that the anti-missionary move, quite apart from other aspects, is a threat to social progress. The diminution of Christian influence will mean the relaxing of the social effort, and the consequent weakening of democracy in our country.

J. D'Souza

SOCIAL SURVEY

Industrial Relations

Shri V. V. Giri, minister of industries, has time after time requested employers to give a suitable human touch to their relations with workers. Shri K. K. Framji, Director of Ordnance Factories, came back recently on the same idea; let employers shed the idea that workers are servants, and imbibe the view that industry must be run on a complex of copartnership with labourers who must be respected and regarded as men; workmen are not soulless tools, they readily respond to recognition and sympathy.

Let anybody peruse the pages of the Labour Law Journal, and he will be struck with the urgent need of such a piece of advice and with the many cases in which the human touch has been sadly lacking in industrial relations. A few cases deserve quotation. The first is the suit of the Warrangal Municipality against its sweepers on the vital question of minimum wages. That this kind of labour is in ample supply should not have led the local authorities to reduce the wages to Rs. 26 per month with a Dearness Allowance

of Rs. 20. The Labour Appellate Tribunal quashed the municipal ruling.

Another case refers to the human side of a household. A man had been dismissed from an Estate for professional misconduct; the wife too was working on the same Estate and remained in the Estate hut; she was forced to leave without any professional reason being alleged. The Appellate Labour Tribunal obliged the Estate to pay compensation for the wrongful dismissal of the wife. A third case is more typical. A poor illiterate woman was working in a Railway colliery; she was dismissed because her age was noted as 55 on her pay sheet. She maintained she was 35 only or 36; the doctor opined she was about 45. On enquiry it was found that the entry had been made by a clerk, not a senior officier, and that the age had been entered on the testimony of a witness who had stood as a personal witness in something like 2000 age-entries. The judge of the Central Labour Tribunal refrained from declaring the age of the woman and was satisfied with declaring the dismissal to have been wrongful.

In the hospital of a Tea Company, it was necessary to have recourse to the Assam Labour Tribunal to secure 50 mosquito nets for indoor patients. Wrongful dismissals are reported in the Labour Law Journal, but what is not reported is what happens often enough, even in government undertakings: the dismissal of workers who are sent away just before they can take advantage of legal benefits.

It was the case of a factory girl who was retrenched as soon as she was married, since it was the custom of

the factory to keep only unmarried girls. The manager gave her his best wishes, but the girl took legal proceedings. In the written statement on behalf of the company, one reads the following: "If the Company were to keep in the packing department girls after their marriage, they would have to furnish a large creche in accordance with the articles of the Factories Act. Having regard to the fact that a very large majority of these packing girls are Goanese, it seems that the facilities of the creche would be enjoyed to the full." The judge had this unexpected argument expunged from the statement. The judge of the Industrial Tribunal in Bombay remarked that no such non-marriage clause had been put in the contract, and was doubtful it would be valid even on insertion: he ordered the girl in the present case to be reinstated. Such instances could be multiplied; they bring out the sub-human wiles of employers but also the growing awareness of workmen about their rights.

Protecting the Humble

The little ones are the object of special favour according to the Constitution. Shri K. M. Katju, the Home Minister, wrote to the president of the Punjab Congress "that it is the settled policy of the Government of India that all socially backward classes are entitled to special care and that there could be no discrimination between the Sikhs and the Hindus in this matter." If this is the case for the Punjab and Pepsu, it should be extended to backward Sikhs in any part of the country.

Legally Sikhs follow the Hindu Code in many respects, and this may explain why the privileges are readily declared to be the same for them as for the Hindus. But the terms of Dr. Katju's letter are far more general. He re-asserted the fact that the Government of India is equally well disposed and favourable to all socially backward classes. This would seem to encourage the backward Christians. Even if help to them does not come out of the Kasturba Fund, partly subscribed to by Christians and Muslims as well as by Hindus, it matters little as long as they receive help. Some Christian Harijans are reported to be loath to receive such gifts which mark them out as inferior citizens and tend to prolong their social inferiority, (a worthy feeling of self-respect indeed); yet why should they not take advantage of such help from "the enemy" as a stepping stone to social advancement?

Another class claiming for special attention is the class of Jagirdars who are to lose their holdings. Are we not going to face a small-scale social revolution? In the villages of Rajasthan they were practically the headmen. As in the case of Princes, their departure as chief landowners will create a vacuum. The Rajas Kshatriya Mahasabha bowed to the inevitable and accepted Pandit Pant's report; Pandit Nehru refused to interfere. The Jagirdars will not even get what they wanted, half the compensation money in negotiable bonds as a first instalment; the state finances permit only of a ten percent allocation. On the other hand care will be taken to keep them on the farms they

were personally cultivating till 1948 or could not cultivate owing to the Tenant Protection Act 1949.

The food-decontrol in 63 of the larger towns of the Bombay State was a sign of an easier food situation. But it threw on the streets 4,500 of the 15,000 workers in the civil supply department, a retrenchment which recalls the retrenchment of officials in Madras on the formation of the new Andhra State, and the retrenchment of 320 nurses in the Madras hospitals. Retrenchment in administration can be explained, but what about cutting down the number of nurses when the Central Health Minister is clamouring for more nurses, more doctors and more hospitals ?

Fervid Youth

Though socialists refuse to follow their Travancore colleagues and to make a rush for the outstretched hand of the Communists, they took the lead of dangerous agitation, as in the grassland invasion in Saurashtra, the rice, tramfare and bonus riots and troubles in Calcutta, and the effervescence in the student world, like Trivandrum and Lucknow.

In Lucknow student fervour for redress in academic matters went beyond all academic limits : burning of post-offices, cutting of phone-wires, stoning of cars, and suspension of public services. The Prime Minister boldly condemned the agitation and went so far as to envisage the closing of the University. Will the students recover their calm and their sense of order after such a phillipic ? The magistrate of Lucknow pointed out "to extraneous elements in the trouble."

Apparently he feared to call a spade a spade ; for beyond the socialist influence, the Communist hand appeared in the riots. Nor should one miss the comic side of the situation which was clear enough when the communist leader in Lucknow advised calm and prudence, since, as he told the students, " this is not yet a revolution." In the meanwhile, New Age, the red official paper, went on praising the rebellious lads. Communists do not mind being inconsistent or even appearing so ; crab-wise they reach their goal by dint of zigzagging.

Youth clamour for two things : an ideal, and a concrete achievement. The second is offered them in many parts of the country in the guise of community projects. In Madras 1500 of them worked 21 days and built up 75 houses and three roads. In Rajamundry students assisted the flood victims ; the Karnatak students built roads leading to their college. Elsewhere students of Agricultural schools went to villages and found in realistic assistance practical training in peasant psychology. A little all over the country students went in for manual work, which is a good deal more meritorious and more inspiring than rebellious agitation ; a point which is often lost sight of is the toning down of social and communal prejudice in common work.

Marketing

People who are in the habit of rubbing shoulders with villagers will appreciate the strong denuntiation by Sri. P. S. Deshmukh of certain malpractices. Middle men are wont to fix prices in a most arbitrary way ;

they use different measures and weights when buying and when selling (*v.g.* the seer of 16 chataks and the seer of 14 chataks, etc.), they deduce taxes according to their own scales ; they charge a cess for temples, sacred bulls and cows, even for officials, etc. The poor illiterates are at their mercy.

Moreover the primary producers do not know how to handle their goods ; they work in dirt and filth, they have no proper storage against rats and insects ; and they suffer from a continuous wastage which follows their produce from field to kitchen. One of the needs of rural marketing is education on the technique of harvesting, storing, transporting, bargaining. As suitable remedies, one may suggest regional legislation, standardisation of measures, and especially cooperative marketing.

The All-India Marketing Officers Conference confirmed the indictment of Shri Deshmukh and stressed among others the need of careful grading. In their view the State should buy only graded products and State-aided institutions should adopt the same practice. Did they dream of having the State fixing the menu of boarding schools and hostels ? They were better inspired when they claimed transport facilities, cold storage opportunities, and assistance to cooperatives. They proposed Indian commissions going abroad and foreign experts coming to India. The travelling mood has taken hold of quite a few reformers. But is the exchange of expert views the best way to establish swaraj ?

E. Gathier

